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General Assembly

Disarmament Commission

Official Records

209th Meeting
Monday, 21 April 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. García . . . . . (Colombia)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. García (Colombia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

The Acting Chairman *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I declare open the 209th meeting and the resumed organizational session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

This meeting has been convened to deal with outstanding organizational matters related to the 1997 substantive session, including the election of the remainder of the Bureau for 1997 and the appointment of the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies.

Election of the Chairman and other officers

The Acting Chairman *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The third item on the agenda adopted at the organizational session in December 1996, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.39, is the election of the Chairman and other officers of the Disarmament Commission for 1997.

As members will recall, at the last organizational meeting, on 11 December 1996, the Commission elected by acclamation the representatives of Cuba and Ecuador as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission for 1997. Still to be elected are the Chairman of the Commission, the six remaining Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and the Chairmen of Working Groups I, II and III.

In accordance with the established principle of rotation for the chairmanship of the Commission, the candidacy for the 1997 chairmanship should come from the Group of Eastern European States. However, in a note verbale dated 15 April 1997, the Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations, in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States for the month of April 1997, advised the Secretariat with regret that, following the withdrawal of the candidature of Mr. Georgi Dimitrov of Bulgaria, no other candidature had been put forward within the Group. The Mission of the Slovak Republic informed the Secretariat that the post of Chairman of the 1997 session of the Disarmament Commission should thus be made available to other regional groups.

Following the principle of rotation, the post of Chairman should now move to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. I should like now to call on Ambassador Guillén of Peru, Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the month of April 1997.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) *(interpretation from Spanish)* : In relation to this session's Bureau, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States is pleased to nominate Ambassador Andelfo García of Colombia as Chairman for this session. Ambassador García has held the vice-chairmanship of this body and is a highly experienced diplomat with extensive knowledge of the Commission's sphere of work.

I should like also to note that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States was originally to have two vice-chairmanships. Since I am proposing a member of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the position of Chairman, and to maintain balance on the

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Bureau. I should like to inform members that one of the Vice-Chairmen — the representative of Ecuador — has, so as to facilitate agreement, nobly and generously decided to postpone his country's aspiration to a vice-chairmanship to some future date. He has done this to allow us to achieve consensus and our Commission to get right down to work.

On behalf of my delegation and of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I should like to express our appreciation to the representative of Ecuador for having made that gesture, of which, I am sure, the Committee will be equally mindful.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Members of the Commission have heard the comments made by the Ambassador of Peru, speaking as Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the month of April.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect, by acclamation, Ambassador Andelfo García of Colombia as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1997.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should now like, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Disarmament Commission, to congratulate Ambassador García on his election.

We will now proceed with the other nominations.

The Centre for Disarmament Affairs has received two nominations from the Group of Asian States for the two vice-chairmanships, as well as nominations for a Vice-Chairman and a Rapporteur from the Group of Western European and other States. I will proceed with the election of those candidates and then open the floor for the nominations that are still outstanding.

The Group of Asian States has endorsed the candidacies of Mongolia and Viet Nam for vice-chairmanships of the Commission for 1997. If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect, by acclamation, the representatives of those two countries as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission for 1997.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Similarly, the Group of Western European and other States has endorsed the candidacy of Luxembourg for a vice-chairmanship of the Commission for 1997 and the candidacy of Ms. Genevieve Hamilton of Australia for the post of Rapporteur. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect, by acclamation, the representative of Luxembourg as Vice-Chairman of the Commission for 1997 and Ms. Hamilton as its Rapporteur.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Nominations for vice-chairmanships of the Commission from the Group of African States and the Group of Eastern European States are still pending.

I do not yet have any information that would indicate that the consultation process in the respective regional groups has drawn to a close. Unless a representative or the Chairman of any of the Groups can give us any new information to the contrary, we will take it that this item is still under consultation.

Since this appears to be the case, we appeal to the respective groups to speed up their consultations and reach an early conclusion on these Bureau posts, which will be decided on by the Commission at a later date.

Election of the Chairmen of Working Groups I, II and III

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Centre for Disarmament Affairs has already received, from the Group of Western European and other States, the nomination of Mr. Michael Hoey, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland, to chair Working Group III, on guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N. I should like to proceed with this nomination now and then to open the floor for other nominations.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect, by acclamation, Mr. Michael Hoey of Ireland to chair its Working Group on conventional weapons, Working Group III.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Still pending are the nominations for the chairmanships of Working Groups I and II. If no one representing a regional group or a delegation wishes to address these matters, we

will assume that the consultation process will move forward and the chairmanships of Working Groups I and II will be decided at a later date by the Commission.

I call on the representative of Germany.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): As representative of the country which last year held the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, I should like to congratulate Ambassador Andelfo García of Colombia on his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1997. Ambassador García is a very experienced diplomat, very well known to all of us. I trust that under his able leadership the Disarmament Commission will make substantial progress during this year's session.

Closure of the session

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I propose that we close this organizational session of the Disarmament Commission. Within a few minutes we shall convene the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.